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Carol X Weakley 10/13/2006 02:55:11 PM From DB/Inbox: Carol X Weakley

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UNCLAS TEL AVIV 04037

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CHARGE: PROG

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: IS KMDR

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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11. Mideast

12. US-Israel Relations

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Key stories in the media:  
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Leading media reported that a total of 8 or 9 Palestinians, including two children, were killed Thursday in two IDF operations in the Gaza Strip. Five Qassam rockets landed in Sderot Thursday, causing a blackout in the city. Israel Radio quoted Israeli military sources as saying that weapons smuggling into the Gaza Strip has recently intensified. The radio and other media reported that this morning, three Hamas activists who the IDF said were about to launch missiles at Israel were killed in an IAF strike in the Gaza Strip.

The Jerusalem Post reported that sources close to PM Ehud Olmert accused Defense Minister Amir Peretz on Thursday of ordering the immediate evacuation of illegal outposts in an attempt to prevent the addition of Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu party to the government coalition. Media reported on disagreements within the Labor Party and on Yisrael Beiteinu's disappointment with maneuvers by members of the Labor Party.

Major media reported that despite concerns of GOI officials that the international community has been moving too slowly on Iran, a special ministerial meeting on the issue endorsed the diplomatic approach to halting Iran's quest to become a nuclear power. Olmert, who convened the discussion, stressed that the efforts against Iran were being led by the international community.

Hatzofe quoted PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas as saying in an interview with Al Arabiya-TV that neither Hamas nor Fatah nor the PFLP have not been asked to recognize Israel. Israel Radio quoted Khaled Mashal, the head of Hamas's political bureau, as saying that his movement does not want to rule the PA on its own, that it is interested in establishing a national union government with Fatah, but that such a government should receive orders from the Palestinians, not from the US or Israel. The station quoted Mashal as saying that Hamas was prepared to hold a prisoner swap with Israel involving abducted IDF soldier Cpl. Gilad Shalit, in accordance with previous deals with Israel. Ha'aretz and Hatzofe reported that Hamas's military wing, Izz al-Din al-Qassam, warned Thursday that if Israel attempted a full scale invasion of the Gaza Strip, it would face many "surprises." A spokesman for the group said at a press conference that Hamas fighters were involved in an ongoing effort to upgrade their abilities to wage war. Yediot reported that on Thursday, during a meeting with Palestinian Interior Minister Said Siam in Tehran, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad promised Hamas financial aid.

Leading media reported that on Thursday Syria rejected Vice PM Shimon Peres's invitation, in a television interview, for President Bashar Assad to visit Jerusalem, saying the Israeli gesture reflected the country's weak position after its war with Lebanon.

The Jerusalem Post reported that talks over the final withdrawal of IDF troops from the northern part of the town of Ghajar, which straddles the Israel-Lebanon border, are to resume next week with UNIFIL and IDF officials optimistic that a solution will be found to complete the Israeli pullout from southern Lebanon and the implementation of UN Security Council. On Thursday, Ha'aretz had cited anger in Lebanon over the current situation in Ghajar. This

morning, Israel Radio reported that Lebanese Defense Minister Elias Murr ordered that his country would respond to violations of its airspace with gunfire.

Leading media reported that on Thursday Hamas militants assassinated a commander of the PA General Intelligence, who was loyal to Mahmoud Abbas, and that that Fatah members retaliated by killing Majed Darbiyeh, commander of the Hamas forces in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza Strip.

Israel's Ambassador to Australia Naftali Tamir was quoted as saying this week in an interview with Ha'aretz that Israel should utilize its strong links with Australia to expand relations in Asia, whose population he termed the "yellow race," in which Israel was the "white race." Tamir was quoted as saying during a meeting with FM Tzipi Livni that "Australia is not lagging behind the US" in its support of Israel.

The Jerusalem Post reported that, rejecting charges that he received bribes from a leading Israeli defense contractor, former Indian defense minister George Fernandes told the newspaper Thursday he had approved the USD 268-million deal in 2000 because he feared an imminent war with Pakistan.

Ha'aretz reported that the panel of eight experts brought together by the newspaper has published its second ranking of potential US presidential candidates based on their positions on Israel-related issues. The panel said that not only does it like former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani's positions in the matter, but that it also believes him. US Senator Barack Obama (D-IL), who continues to get the lowest overall ranking, also scores lowest on the credibility index. Ha'aretz said that the real reason for his low ranking is that the panel has no faith in the sincerity of his pro-Israel statements.

Yediot presented the results of a Mina Zemach (Dahaf Institute) poll:

"What is do you think about conducting negotiations with Syria over peace in exchange for the entire Golan?" Opposed: 64 percent; in favor: 33 percent.

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**II. Mideast:**  
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Summary:  
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Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner and diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Suddenly the Palestinian issue is becoming a key aim, almost an exalted one.... Such a simple diplomatic achievement, so very simple. Is it possible that Rice too has fallen into the trap?"

Deputy Managing Editor and right-wing columnist Caroline B. Glick wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "The Secretary of State ... claims that the establishment of a state for

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a people who have distinguished themselves ad the most overtly pro-jihad, terrorist society of the world would be the greatest thing American could ever do."

Prof. Amnon Rubinstein, President of the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, who served as (Meretz) education minister, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv: "It is not only Israel that is threatened.... The plausible victory of Iran-style extremist Islam also threatens the Christian communities, the cradle of whose faith is the Middle East."

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**II. "For Rice, It's Time For Palestine"**

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner and diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (10/13): "The American Task Force on Palestine made history this week....

Rice ... talked about Palestine. Here is a sure sign that time is passing: Like President Bill Clinton in his day, for Rice, too, the volume increases as the term approaches its end. Suddenly the Palestinian issue is becoming a key aim, almost an exalted one. This, apparently, is its chimerical nature -- after all, it always looks as though a solution is close enough to touch. Such a simple diplomatic achievement, so very simple. Is it possible that Rice too has fallen into the trap? Although she is thoroughly familiar with the end of Clinton's profound commitment to a solution to the conflict, she is not perturbed. 'I promise you my personal commitment to that goal,' she says. 'There could be no greater legacy for America.' But is this indeed the case? Last July, opinion pollsters asked the American public whether the US 'has a responsibility to try to resolve the conflict between Israel and other countries in the Middle East, or is that not the United States' business?' The answer was different from Rice's. Only 33 percent of the respondents thought that this is America's responsibility; 58 percent said it is none of America's business."

## II. "Soros Moves On To Israel"

Deputy Managing Editor and right-wing columnist Caroline B. Glick wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (10/13): "The Secretary of State of a President who was once friendlier to Israel

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than any of his predecessors now claims that the establishment of a state for a people who have distinguished themselves as the most overtly pro-jihad, terrorist society of the world would be the greatest thing American could ever do. Unfortunately, unless concerted steps are taken by the Israeli government, Israeli citizens and the American Jewish community, the downward trend in relations with the US will only get worse. Perhaps most upsetting is the central role that a tiny minority of American Jews has played in souring ties between Jerusalem and Washington. That minority has undermined support for Israel in the Democratic Party, and now seeks to undermine Israel's position in the US in general.... Not all of our friends are Jews and not all Jews are our friends."

## III. "The Jews Are Not Alone"

Prof. Amnon Rubinstein, President of the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, who served as (Meretz) education minister, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (10/13): "Is something fundamental taking place in Europe? Is this an intellectual rebellion against the Islamic threat? It is too early to tell.... Arab Christians view themselves as part of the Arab national movement -- in fact, they were among its founders -- and they are united with their ethnic brothers in condemning Israel and opposing it. Some of the more hostile Arab Knesset members, who identify with Hezbollah more than other [Arabs], are Christian. Nonetheless, Israel radicalization is detrimental to the Christians and speeds up their emigration from the Middle East.... The Christian distress changes nothing in the Israeli-Arab-Muslim conflict and does not subtract anything from the might of Arab Christians' feelings vis-a-vis Israel. It is not only Israel that is threatened. The Jews are not alone. The plausible victory of Iran-style extremist Islam also threatens the Christian communities, the cradle of whose faith is the Middle East.'

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## 12. US-Israel Relations:

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### Summary:

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Washington correspondent Nathan Guttman wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "The 2006 mid-term elections are, ultimately, not all that important for the [American] Jewish

community,"

**Block Quotes:**

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"Israel and the Mid-Term Elections"

Washington correspondent Nathan Guttman wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (10/13): "The 2006 mid-term elections are, ultimately, not all that important for the [American] Jewish community.... If there are any differences on the issue of Israel, they are nuanced and minor. Jewish activists are looking at the larger picture: What will happen if -- as many analysts expect -- the Democrats takeover one or both houses of Congress? This could mean a complete change in the leadership of all Congressional committees. But the activists agree that even here, thought the changes might make a difference on several issues important for the Jewish community, they will not affect Congress's strong support for Israel."

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